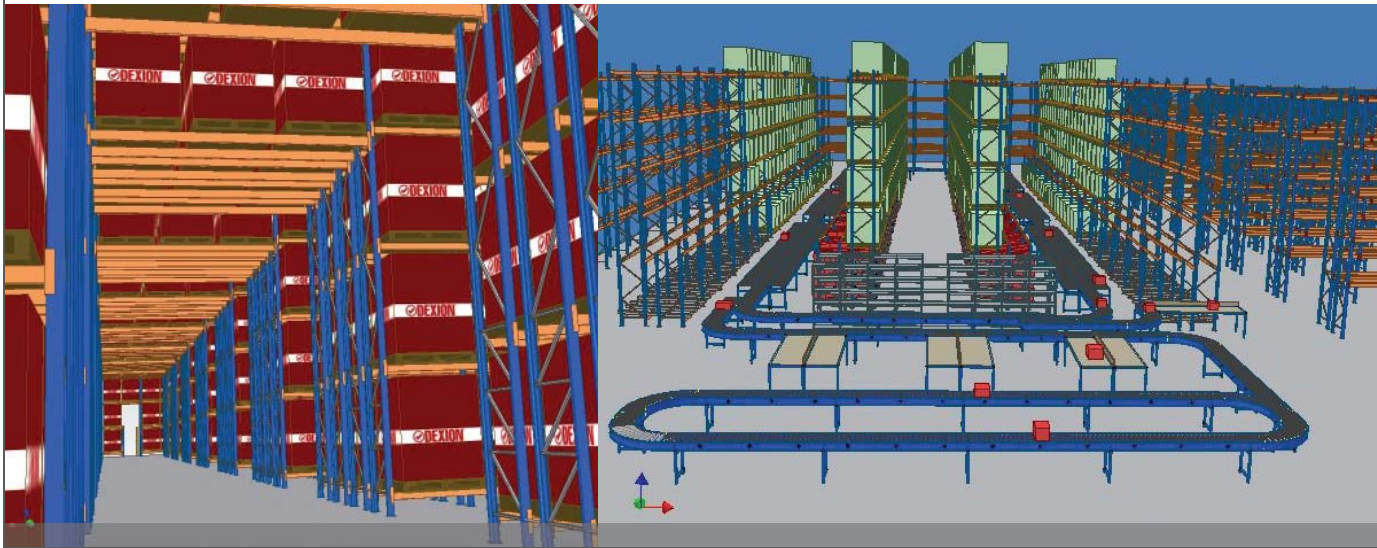




3D Imagery Generated from ProCreate

3D modelling program Leapfrogs the industry



Graham Eastick

Pro Create 3D
imagine explore design

A recently introduced three-dimensional modelling system has dramatically increased customer service levels. It not only facilitates quick turnaround for costs and drawings, but also provides an accurate 3D view of the finished storage solution.

The new system, entitled ProCreate, is AutoCad-compatible, and uses the latest AutoDesk Inventor software to produce highly realistic 3D walkarounds of installations, from small office store-rooms to large distribution centres.

With the integration of ProCreate into the long-established Dexion Design Program, a number of processes have been streamlined, allowing a better interpretation of a customer's needs and providing far quicker turnaround. For example, staff can now output the complete component design of a 20,000 to 30,000-pallet warehouse

and generate drawings in less than 10 minutes. In the past, that would take two or three days to do.

In addition, customers can easily communicate the key features of a project within their own businesses, allowing all stakeholders to get a genuine feel as to what the installation will look like.

According to Graham Eastick, Dexion's Executive General Manager – Key Accounts, the company felt it was getting behind industry best practice in terms of its use of 3D modelling and design tools – and so opted to go for the very best systems available, “leapfrogging” what was on offer from other suppliers.

“The Dexion Design Program had been around for 12 years. It was written and developed in-house, but in recent years had become an engineering-focused package, rather than sales and customer driven,” he said.

"It was excellent for structural engineering calculations and produced engineering type 2D drawings. But it was relatively inflexible and didn't provide much in terms of quick and easy output and it certainly didn't provide much in terms of presentation."

After a survey of competitive offerings and client requirements, an internal working group was established to create a modelling program with the best design tools.

Representatives were chosen from the sales department to drive the project, and from the engineering and IT departments to turn the vision into a reality.

The group found it already had a very powerful tool in the Dexion Design

ProCreate provides a 360° view of the warehouse, including a snapshot or cross-section in still format.

It can also take a "virtual camera" in and view any area or can provide "fly-through" simulations from any view in almost real-time.

Staff can then convert these drawings into a format that customers can use, supplying stills in either JPG or bitmap format or as PowerPoint slides.

"We can also supply fly-throughs in Windows-compatible software, so customers don't require 3D modelling capabilities," Eastick said. "We provide this capability as a value-added service. As leading industry suppliers, our customers expect this level of service," he said.

"We understand that other parties such as builders and consultants expect good tools, quick turnarounds and industry-best practice from a quality partner."

In addition, the service won't just be used for major projects, with the interface now written, a drawing can be generated every time for any sized project.

"Internally, we called this 'Project Leapfrog' because we've aimed at progressing well ahead of competitive services. Now that ProCreate is fully implemented across the entire Dexion network, we are confident that this objective has been comfortably achieved," he said

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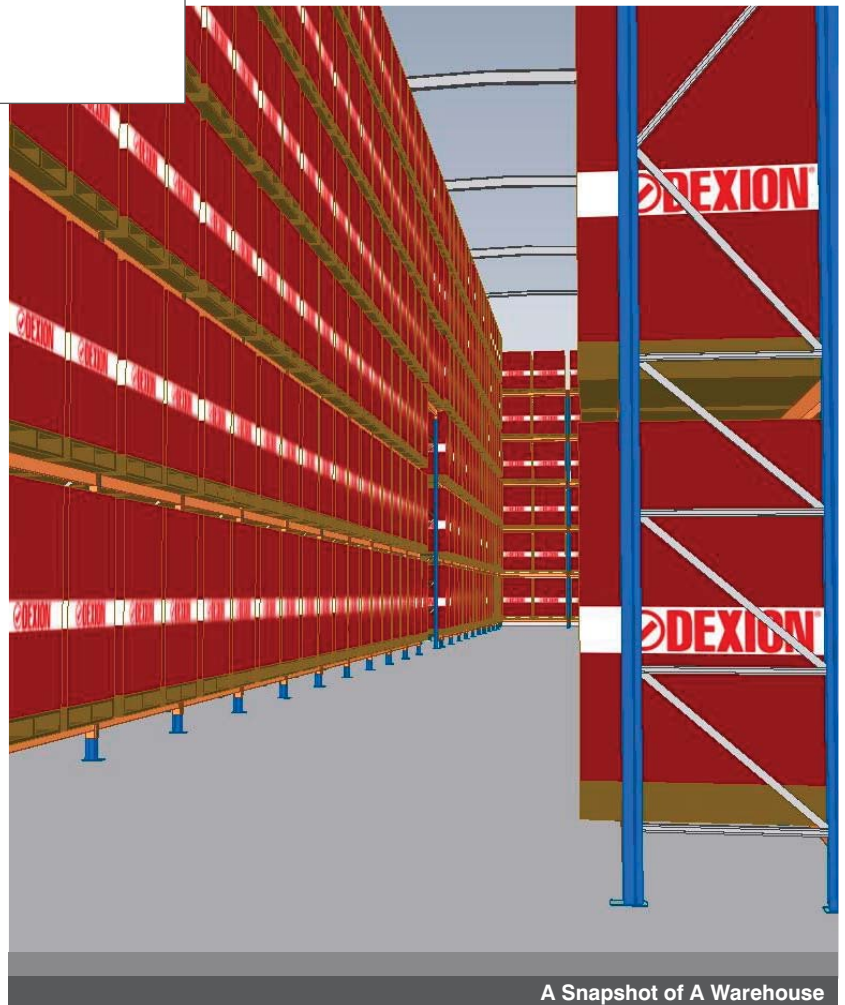
Program, a flexible database which is able to be infinitely moulded and adjusted to suit any needs.

With the addition of ProCreate, the functionality and features of the program have increased dramatically, providing a platform capable of costing a job, putting the job into the plant, commissioning the job, and providing detailed 3D site drawings.

Eastick said that due to the popularity of AutoCad in the warehousing and logistics marketplace, it was essential to maintain AutoCad compatibility.

"As a result of the investment AutoDesk has put into its suite of products, its Inventor product is the very latest in design and drawing packages," said Eastick.

"Therefore, we commissioned AutoDesk to write an interface between the Dexion Design Program and Inventor, which involved the modelling of the thousands of components in the Dexion range."



A Snapshot of A Warehouse